DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 480 196 JC 030 430

AUTHOR	Abue, Peter
TITLE	Adapting the Community College Model in Other Countries: A Literature Review.
PUB DATE	2002-05-00
NOTE	11p.
PUB TYPE	Information Analyses (070) -- Opinion Papers (120)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Access to Education; *Community Colleges; Economic Change; *Economic Development; Economic Progress; *Global Approach; Institutional Cooperation; International Cooperation; Job Training; Labor Force; *Labor Market; Two Year Colleges; *Vocational Education

ABSTRACT

This document examines what the literature says regarding adaptation of the American community college model to a global perspective. Institutions that draw parallels to U.S. community colleges can be found on almost every continent due to the increasing demand for extended educational opportunity and the need for technical training. When the community college model is tailored to a nation's unique political and economic situation, the system can vary greatly. For example, in South Africa, businesses are investing millions of dollars to upgrade the country's poorly equipped technical colleges so they can tackle the country's 30% unemployment rate. Thailand is hoping to create a system of 10 community colleges that would serve poor areas. McGuthrie (2001) argues that the reason many countries find American community colleges appealing is because of their emphasis on open enrollment, adult education, and ties to local businesses. For decades, developed and developing countries have used post-secondary education reform to counter socio-economic inequities. Two avenues for reform involve the relationship between community colleges and international development, and the role of colleges as catalysts for reform. The author argues that, if adapted conscientiously, the U.S. community college model will afford developing countries a pathway to much-needed economic development. (Contains 31 references.) (NB)

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Adapting the Community College Model in Other Countries: A Literature Review

Peter Abue

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Adapting the Community college model in other countries: A literature review

By Peter Abue

The community college model was developed in response to the inability of universities to meet economic needs and the demand for higher education. Adapting the model to other countries therefore would entail recognition of the need to improve economic welfare through quality education. Configurations of this model include multipurpose institutions, combing academic, pre-university, technical, remedial, and continuing education; specialized orientations, offering 2 years of technical or occupational programs; a binary approach that bridges upper-secondary, postsecondary, college, and /or university education; and approaches that focus on life-long learning (Raby 1995). However, recognition of each nations need should be the first criterion for adaptation. Uchendu (1993) laments the failure to recognize a developing nation's need in the planning for higher education in Nigeria and opines that for any meaningful development in any country to take place, the educational planning should be based on the country's needs. Many Nigerian universities have been mounting courses irrespective of their relevance to the national need (Uchendu 1993).

One urgent issue in seeking adaptation of the US model is the preparation of Americans themselves to function in an interdependent world. Community colleges can make a special contribution stemming from their strong commitment to linking academic studies with the world outside the classroom, their flexible and innovative approach to educational problems, and their philosophy of lifelong learning. Krasno (1985) discusses the Contributions of the Community Colleges to International Education with the view that as community colleges increasingly move to internationalize their curricula, to accommodate more foreign students in their classrooms, and to engage in technical assistance projects in other countries, they will find themselves at the very center of major issues in the field of international education. Nigeria' philosophy of education for example is based on the integration of the individual into a sound and effective citizen and equal opportunities for all citizens of the national the primary, secondary and tertiary levels both inside and outside the formal school system (National Policy on Education)

The key to the success story of economic renewal in the United States is a national **human resources development** strategy in which community colleges assume(d) the national training role. This national strategy recognized changes in the American economy and workforce, such as a more educated labor force, the demographics of developing countries, the increased participation of women in the workforce, the transition to a postindustrial economy based on service rather than manufacturing, and the dependence of economic health on exports. Eskow (1982) discusses the Community College and the Human Resources Development and suggests that this strategy must focus on promoting business/industry collaboration, community- and industry-specific training programs, lifelong access to training and retraining for workers, the fulfillment of the training needs of large businesses and small enterprises, and work experience for youth. To assist in these efforts, the Association of Community College Trustees and the Business and Industry Community College Coalition propose the formation of a Human Resources Development Council (HRDC) in every community college to: (1) create business and

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industry diffusion networks; (2) coordinate and evaluate community training programs; (3) create a master training plan and strategy; (4) introduce new training programs; and (5) bring educational and training resources into the community

Maner (1981) explores Human Resources Development, using the the **Wor-Wic** Technical Community College established in 1975 in response to the need for the upgrading and expansion of the local labor force as a unique example. Funded by a variety of sources, Wor-Wic offers training in existing public and private facilities in the region, using churches and storefronts for day lecture space, public schools for evening classes, and specialized shops and labs for vocational training. A custom-designed "in-house" program complements regularly scheduled courses, providing benefits to owners and employees of local businesses. Without the burden of a campus-bound philosophy, Wor-Wic is able to minimize per -student costs and maximize program flexibility. The decreased costs and greater flexibility of the "college without walls" approach make it a viable alternative model for developing countries, given adequate support from significant leaders and financial backing from international funding agencies

Tailored to each nation's unique political and economic situation, the community-college **systems to be created will vary greatly from country to country**: McMuthrie (2001) gives an array of regional variations, and reports that Mexico has created a network of two-year technical colleges that work closely with local industry. In southern India, the Roman Catholic Church has helped create dozens of small community colleges that provide courses in carpentry and auto repair for slum dwellers and the unemployed. South African businesses are investing millions of dollars to upgrade the country's poorly equipped technical colleges so they can tackle the country's 30 percent unemployment rate. Argentina is working with a $165-million loan from the Inter-American Development Bank to upgrade hundreds of small vocational programs and create an accreditation system for them. Thailand is hoping to create a system of 10 community colleges that would serve poor areas. A previous attempt collapsed in the Asian financial crisis of 1997, but government leaders remain convinced of its value. These strides remind us that developing countries are partners in the process of adaptation of the US community college model.

US community colleges are now more than ever working with institutions abroad to establish **partnerships** that will enhance vocational programs and promote democracy and economic stability in developing countries. Many of these are financed by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and have become touring avenues for international visitors (McMuthrie 2001). In 1994 a report on "Seeking a New Partnership" presented findings from the Task Force on U.S. Community Colleges, established by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to identify and develop specific ways in which community colleges might help implement USAID's strategies for sustainable development. Following introductory materials, including an overview of the Task Force's mandate and findings, the report discusses the mutual interest among USAID and the nation's community colleges in sustainable development and cost effective partnerships (USAID Report 1994). Rinehart (1985) refers to the partnership developed by US community colleges and the Peace Corps as a Natural Symbiosis. He highlights the similarities of the goals and activities of community colleges and the Peace Corps, describing meetings between Peace Corps and community college representatives investigating possibilities for cooperation (e.g., community colleges providing

training for Peace Corps volunteers in the skills needed by developing countries) (Rinehart 1985).

Opportunities for Partnership have reached an advanced stage **in the Pacific Rim** for example. Community colleges are poised to play a vital role in Vietnam and other Pacific Rim nations currently seeking to develop their business sectors and economies. Projects and partnerships with U.S. community colleges are currently in progress in India, Malaysia, China, Japan, Taiwan, and Korea. In addition, the Vietnamese Ministry of Education and Training has expressed interest in establishing a community college system in Vietnam (Abel 1996). Currently, the Vietnamese educational system places high school-aged students on either a university preparation, vocational technical college, secondary technical education, or teacher training track. The Ministry, however, has identified major problems in this system, including inappropriate curriculum, a lack of training in the right areas of business/industry and of continuity, a lack of business/industry participation in curriculum development, outdated facilities and equipment, and poorly trained and low paid staff (Abel 1996).

Whittaker (1990) editor of Proceedings of the 1989 Annual Conference of the Pacific Region Association for Higher Education (August 16-18, 1989) explores the issue of higher education in light of national political and social change, and the need for international competitiveness within the **Pacific Region nations**. All the 17 papers presented reflected major issues influencing community college such as (1) Policy Issues (2) Leadership Issues (3) Educational Change (4 Educational Technology. The Role of Community Colleges in the Adult Higher Education in Pacific Region in Educating Managers for the Multicultural Workforce seem to be an overarching theme of the conference proceedings

In India, an effort is currently underway to involve college students and teachers in the eradication of illiteracy. In the universities, five agencies have set directly or indirectly the goal of meeting the needs of community education and development. Incentives for students and attempts to link adult education with the undergraduate curriculum have been undertaken. A remedy is proposed which involves developing a systematic program for adult education within the university system. A non-formal education stream would permit a person to enroll at any age and learn at his/her own pace (Narang 1989). India has suddenly realized that despite literacy efforts through the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s, the number of illiterate people continued to rise and the community college principle of educating adults for the workforce would be the lasting remedy. The community college would offer an education program designed to meet community needs. University extension work would involve extending resources to the community. College agency activities would be coordinated. The role of colleges would be to define the workload of the teacher in extension, adopt a geographical area in which to work, form a community education committee with community members, support teacher study of the work, offer higher level courses, and operate community colleges as needed (Narang 1989).

Abili (1988) provides s three-part discussion of the applicability of the comprehensive two-year community college model to **Iran**. Part I provides an overview of Iran's current economic status and manpower needs, the advantages that the development of a community college system would afford the country, the specific educational needs that could be met by a two -year postsecondary educational system, and the measures that would need to be taken to ensure the

success of the institutions. Part II examines the components of the proposed community college model, focusing on (1) admissions policy, which would be more flexible than that of the existing colleges and universities in Iran, but more selective than the "open door" institutions in the United States; (2) institutional control and finance, which would follow a U.S. model of local control and institutional autonomy, but an Iranian model of central government financing; and (3) comprehensive curricula. Part III offers recommendations concerning the programs that should be offered by the institutions, including transfer education, technical-vocational education, agriculture education, teacher training, adult education, general education, remedial education, and guidance and counseling. Concluding comments stress the need to consider the values of the Iranian people, local customs and traditions, patterns of interaction, and indigenous academic traditions in order to implement the community college model in Iran (Abili 1988).

A Study for the Commonwealth of **Puerto Rico** Advisory Council on Vocational and Technical Education by Barton and Garrison (1972), evolved a master plan for an educational system consisting of 2-year comprehensive community colleges using the model fully operative in several other states in the United States. Following an examination of Puerto Rico's present higher education system and the prevailing socioeconomic, several recommendations were made which, when implemented, would initiate an island-wide, planned, coordinated system for community college education. Among these recommendations were: (1) development of vocational -technical education programs within these colleges, (2) development of a funding system, (3) installation of a Planning-Programming-Budgeting System, (4) provisions for specific training for new and expanding industry, (5) development of a system-wide public information policy, and (6) initiation of an effort to establish "outreach" education programs in every institution within the system (Barton and Garrison 1972)

Similar institutions that draw parallels from US community colleges have been found on almost every continent, due to the increasing demands for extended educational opportunity and the need for technical training. Ndyajunwoha (1978), refers to the "communiversity" concept of Developing Countries developed as a model for non-university, post-secondary, technical education on the **African continent** with a mission to accessibility, comprehensive programming, and responsiveness to the community. The goals is to test the community college idea in Africa, transfer appropriate technology, improve literacy and vocational education, and establish an International Center for Community College Education. The objectives are to provide career, technical, and vocational education; general education; college parallel programs; remedial instruction; adult and continuing education; and counseling and information services. The communiversity, as a community-based institution, offers a means for implementing a realistic strategy for rural development in the true African sense. (See also Abayode (1987)). Fafunwa and Aisiku (1982) make a comparative survey of Education in Africa and conclude that in old African society, the purpose of education was clear, functionalism was the main guiding principle. Education was generally for an immediate induction into society and a preparation for adulthood. In particular African education emphasized social responsibility, job orientation political participation and spiritual or moral values (Fafunwa and Aisiku 1982)

McMuthrie (2001) argues that the reason **many countries find American community colleges appealing** is because of their emphasis on open enrolment, adult education and ties to the local

industry. Meinhard (1978) compares The Volkshochschulen (VHS), Germany's Community College or "People's Universities" of **Germany** with the community college system in the United States and finds similarities in enrollment policies, job-related instructional programs, functions of the national association of the VHS, and the advancement of adult education in developing nations (Meinhard 1978). Hoffman (1976) investigates and evaluates the idea of the community/junior college as an effective educational model to be adopted by developing nations and describes similitudes in two-year colleges in the United States, **Canada, and Japan** (Hoffman 1976). Johnson (1973) affirmed that the community junior college clearly has a potential for making uniquely important contributions to the reconstruction, rehabilitation, and economic development of **Vietnam** (Johnson1973). The developing economy and educational system of Taiwan proved receptive to the efforts of junior college leaders in the United States working in cooperation with educators in **Taiwan** (Knoebel 1970)

For decades, developed and developing countries have used post-secondary education reform to counter socio-economic inequities. Two avenues for reform involve the relationship between community colleges and international development and the role of colleges as catalysts for reform. With respect to international development, however, **problems exist** with exporting the community college model, including financial considerations, academic considerations related to standards, and issues of cultural colonialism. Raby (1995) deals with Community College Models, discussing the Myths and Realities of Access and Equality, while Madden (1998) recommends the experimentation of the Community College model in Latin America and recommends preconditions that must be considered for exporting community colleges to developing countries. Madden (1998) discusses the historical development of higher education in Latin America and the current favorable political and economic climate for housing colleges as one of those conditions and suggests using Argentina as a testing-ground for the community college system.

McMuthrie (2001) further observes, that the major difference in operationalization of community colleges in developing countries is the **availability of finance and skilled teachers** to make it successful. Abel (1996) observes that although Vietnam has recognized the need for a community college system, the upper level educational hierarchy is unfamiliar with participatory curriculum development, tax supported education, and open enrollment policies and is moving slowly. Another major barrier observed was funding, as sources for loans are limited and politics can interfere with funding efforts. U.S. colleges can help Vietnam develop a college system through feasibility studies, funding, or improving the understanding of international development Onwuka (1981) discusses **curriculum development** in Africa and suggest in adapting any educational system to a new environment, the curriculum must be thoroughly reviewedd in relation to the receiving culture (Onwuka, 1981)

In developing countries, **private industries** accustomed to providing on the job training don't always see the benefit of supporting an academic program, while **families** consider vocational training second rate for their children. Nduka (1964) writing on western education and the Nigerian cultural background, admits that it had all along been evident technical and vocational education constituted the weakest link in the Nigerian educational chain since the system of education was oriented towards literary and academic subjects (Nduka, 1964). Vocational schools need to establish credibility with government officials, parents and future employers if

they will serve as catalysts and establish the needed economic development (McMuthrie, 2001). With respect to the colleges as catalysts for reform, the struggle remains to implement an educational system that recognizes and endorses a multi-ethnic, multicultural society. Such an effort is currently being undertaken in both South Africa (Raby, 1995).

Community college related institution who have spearheaded creative progress in international education include the Community Colleges for International Development, Incorporated **(CCID).** Developed in 1976, the principal mission of CCID is to provide mid-level personnel training and technical assistance in occupational, vocational, and technical education to developing nations throughout the world. Fersh (1997) reports that in the late 1970s, its first contacts abroad were made with Taiwan and Surinam and its first annual national conference was held, while King (1990) agrees that Foreign Technical-Assistance Programs developed by CCID to provide technical assistance in Taiwan, Surinam, the Republic of China, and other countries was among the first community college outreach. Today, there are 23 Member colleges and 55 Affiliates.

After 20 years of adapting the community college model, CCID has continued its innovative progress with the creation of educational programs and services on-line through a "virtual" campus (Fersh 1997). Robert L. Breuder and Roy G. Adama describe the bilateral education agreement between CCID Inc, (a cooperative of nine United States community colleges) and the Republic of Surinam and considers Surinam's system of vocational education and the cooperative's technical and teacher training activities, base of financial support, problems, and goals (Breuder and Adama 1981). Another institution worth mentioning here is the Community College Cooperative for International Development (CCCID), which is comprised of six Florida community colleges and has as its principal mission the provision of mid-level manpower training and technical assistance in occupational, vocational, and technical education to developing nations (Breuder and King1979).

The US community college model, no doubt offer **parallels,** which resonate with aspects of the educational systems already prevalent in many developing nations. State University of New York (SUNY's) system's overly decentralized governance structure for example is similar to the Ministry of Education's State School Board system. The Local community/sponsor system assumes a parallel to the system of community learning centers operating in some locations in Nigeria (Fafunwa, 1971). The Open access and the presently practiced Universal Primary Education program (UPE) are predicated by the similar ideological focus of making education accessible to the common folks (Nwagu, 1976). The proposal for a free Universal primary Education in Nigeria which took effect in 1976 require all children of school age throughout the country to be in school. From thence on, attendance at school became obligatory on all children within the school age bracket. Clearly, from that time, the Nigerian society never was the same again (Nwagu, 1976). Training the labor force is equally the goal of Nigeria's educational system aimed at stemming out the rate of graduate unemployment from secondary and tertiary level institutions. To appreciate a discussion on the adaptability of these parallels, we must also appreciate the pace of development of higher education especially in developing countries. With regard to human resources, Abayode (1987) believes that the occupational participation and productivity of the pupolace(sic) are important contributory factors to the level of economic

development (Abayode 1987). The US Community College model if adapted conscientiously will afford developing countries a pathway to this much-needed development.

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